

Community Services and Recreation

DRAFT MINUTES/APPROVED

To: Community Services Commission Members

From: Gerardo Sorkin, Director

Re: Commission Meeting November 4, 2008

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Laurie Jean Hannon at 5:30 p.m.

I. Attendance:

Present: Antoinette McKeon, Laurie-Jean Hannon, Walter Heinig, Judith McKay.

Staff: Gerardo Sorkin, Director and Carla Pelliccio (Secretary).

Absent: Thomas Balga, William Carey, Michael Compare, Frank Kruglik and Scott Leamon.

II. Acceptance of Minutes:

Due to lack of quorum, no motion could be made to accept the Minutes of October 14, 2008. Approval of these minutes will be added to next meeting's agenda.

III. Correspondence:

A thank you letter was received by the Department of Community Services and Recreation from the Greater New Haven United Way, thanking the department for our participation in this year's Day's of Caring Diaper Drive. Over 100,000 diapers were collected throughout the State of CT.

IV. Director's Report:

Daycare:

Enrollment: Daycare has maintained their enrollment numbers. Still operating at capacity.

Halloween: The children from the daycare celebrated the festivities of Halloween by hosting a mini parade through the Department offices.

Trainings: Trainings continue for the daycare staff surrounding issues of children's behavioral health.

Risk Management: A problem with the height of the School Age playground fence had been identified and later corrected by the Public Works Department.

Counseling:

Personnel: Mr. Sorkin announced the resignation of Sandra Gonsalves, Counselor III. Her last day will be mid-January 2009. Mrs. Gonsalves has decided to increase her private practice hours. Mr. Sorkin is actively recruiting for this position in addition to the Counselor IV that still remains vacant from the last Commission meeting.

Qualified candidates who had been considered for the Counselor IV position are now being called back for consideration of the Counselor III position. In addition to his recruitment efforts, he continues to actively interview candidates for Counselor IV as well as for Counselor III. The position is continuing to be advertised on Careerbuilder.com, the CT Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, as well as the local University Career Services Departments.

The successful candidate for the Counselor IV position will have leadership skills, clinical supervision skills, computer skills (specifically classification skills - the ability to assemble electronic medical records), as well as the ability to go out into the community and work comfortably with the public.

The two current clinicians are maintaining the current client case load (approximately 100 cases, with varying levels of contact based upon client need). They continue to operate on transitional mode and are not accepting new referrals at this time unless it is an emergency situation. A waiting list for new clients is in place. The Department still continues to maintain the level of quality of counseling services.

Mr. Sorkin encouraged that the Commissioners spread the word regarding these two opportunities and welcomed referrals of candidates.

Senior Center:

Senior Center Renovation Grant: A meeting took place with the First Selectman, Manager of the Senior Center, a consultant, Finance staff, the Town Engineer and the architect to discuss necessary steps in moving forward with the renovation/expansion efforts. They are currently working on the long-term plan and Mr. Sorkin plans to report on developing details by the next meeting. Some programs may remain at the Senior Center and they are currently looking at other off-site locations for activities to take place during the renovations.

Activities: Copies of the monthly *Senior Happenings* brochure of activities and events were distributed to each Commission member.

Youth Services:

Substance Abuse Prevention Council: A meeting for The SAPC is scheduled for November 19, 2008. The meeting place has been changed from Community Services to North Haven High School, thus allowing students to attend the meeting directly from their school day. The council will be reviewing various issues surrounding substance abuse and develop strategies to combat the issues.

The question was posed by Mr. Heinig as to how the effectiveness of these prevention programs are assessed. In addition, he commented that he would like to see if and how these prevention programs can assist those individuals who are already affected by a drug or alcohol addiction. Mr. Sorkin mentioned that he hopes that this Council may also be able to take on the task of conducting assessments and collect data to determine the nature and causes of substance abuse with the local youth in North Haven. This data would greatly assist in the strategic planning of prevention programs.

Community Services:

Monthly Food Bank Statistics: A total of 432 meals were distributed (48 individuals serviced) for the month of October. They are given approximately three meals per person for three days.

Holiday Food Drive: A press release from Selectman McCarty was distributed to all Commissioners promoting the annual “Holiday Food Drive.” Items may be dropped-off at the Food Pantry in the North Haven Congregational Church weekdays between 9AM and 1PM. There are also containers to collect donations of non-perishable food at the entrance to Town Hall and in many other churches and businesses around town. Close to the delivery dates (November 21st and December 19th), donations of turkeys will be gladly accepted. In addition to the churches, the Community Services food bank is now accepting family names to be added to the annual Thanksgiving Meal list for distribution (including turkeys and other non-perishable traditional holiday food). The department will also begin accepting names for the Holiday Meal and Toy distribution list following the Thanksgiving holiday. According to statistics from 2007, approximately 35 families benefited from the Thanksgiving food distribution, and 50 families took advantage of the Holiday Meal and Toy distribution. It is anticipated that these numbers will be met or exceeded this year.

2-1-1 Infoline: Copies of the flyer were distributed to each Commission member on this community based resource. This hotline operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This resource is free and confidential.

Energy Assistance Program: Energy Assistance application appointments began on October 1st. Appointments are being handled by three staff members and take place on Wednesdays only. The first oil deliveries to awarded applicants began on November 3, 2008. To date (11/3/08), one-hundred forty seven (147) applications have been processed. Of these applications, one hundred (100) of these applications have been approved; forty-seven (47) have been denied. Two possible reasons for denial are: insufficient documentation to proceed with processing application or applicant is over-income. The applicant will be notified via letter if they are awarded or denied. If applicants are denied due to insufficient documentation, they have 10 business days to return these documents to the Community Action Agency. Community Services assists in the collection and processing of this documentation. Mr. Sorkin has requested that the Community Action agency provide the Department with a list of those applicants who have been denied in order to see if further assistance can be offered by the Department. Additional resources that can be offered are Operation Fuel and the local emergency oil fund that can assist with emergency fuel delivery.

V. Finance Report:

The September 2008 budget report was reviewed by the Commission.

Community Services: September 08 bottom line = 20.2% of budget spent YTD.

Welfare: September 08 bottom line = 22.6% of budget spent YTD. These funds are utilized on expenses surrounding evictions (including moving and storage).

Senior Center: September 08 bottom line = 20.7% of budget spent YTD.

Daycare: Current snapshot of Daycare expenditures were also distributed and reviewed.

VI. Old Business:

There is no old business to report.

VII. New Business:

Donations: Mrs. McKeon announced that she will be donating turkeys again this year on behalf of the Italian Club in New Haven that she belongs to.

Commissioner Appointments: Laurie-Jean Hannon will not be attending the December 2008 Commission meeting, however Antoinette McKeon will be available and thus the meeting will go on as regularly scheduled. The December meeting will be the last for Commissioners Kruglik, Leamon and McKeon's terms. New appointees will attend the January 2009 Commission meeting.

Personnel: Mrs. Hannon had brought to the attention of the Commission and to Mr. Sorkin that she and Mrs. McKeon have received a few phone calls from staff. Mr. Sorkin explained the mechanisms that are in place through the various unions, which allow for an open environment to voice any concerns that staff may have.

VIII. Public Participation:

No people were in attendance.

IX. Adjournment:

Due to lack of quorum, no Motion could be made to Adjourn. The meeting ended at 6:46 p.m.